

cate for revaccination, and has performed the operation hundreds of times in adults and in minors; that he finds about one in ten or a dozen take the disease effectually; and, to test that matter, he has taken the scabs thus obtained, and used them with the most satisfactory results; that he has not known any person have smallpox after revaccination; that he has full faith in vaccination at any age beyond fifteen, or before it; and that his confidence in it increases as his observations and experience increase.

I have no hesitation in saying that all the physicians of our county agree entirely in the above opinions; and that there is not one among them who could be prevailed upon to inoculate instead of revaccinate, at any age. No occurrence of whatever kind has taken place here to shake the confidence of the people, nor the physicians, in its efficacy. On the contrary, all experience has had directly the contrary effect. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, it was distrusted very much by the populace, and nothing but the firmness of the physicians prevented inoculation being extensively resorted to; now, all this has subsided, and I presume, from general knowledge on the subject, that it would require weighty arguments to induce any of the intelligent part of our community to submit to inoculation. In this quiescent state of public feeling, how ridiculous would it be to disturb it, without the most convincing evidence of necessity for so doing. Let but the physicians begin to talk about the necessity of inoculation at or after fifteen years of age, and farewell to all confidence in vaccination. I trust, however, that such an accumulation of evidence will be produced, now that the question has been raised, as will prove that vaccination is no humbug, and that all the physicians of the last fifty years are not the dupes which a contrary conclusion would prove them to be. With the view of contributing a mite towards this result, the foregoing article has been penned.

CHESTER, May 31, 1852.

ART. XIV.—*Case of Hermaphrodism, involving the Operation of Castration and illustrating a new principle in Juridical Medicine.* By S. D. Gross, M. D., Professor of Surgery in the Medical Department of the University of Louisville.

THE following case, which came under my observation in 1849, will, if I mistake not, prove both novel and interesting to my professional brethren. So far as my information extends, there is no account of any operation for a similar object upon record.

The subject of the case, at the time I first saw her, was three years of age, having been born on the 10th of July, 1846. She had always, up to this

period, been regarded as a girl, and had been so pronounced at her birth by the accoucheur. At the age of two, however, she began to evince the tastes, disposition, and feelings of the other sex; she rejected dolls and similar articles of amusement, and became fond of boyish sports. She was well-grown, perfectly healthy, and quite fleshy. Her hair was dark and long, the eyes black, and the whole expression most agreeable. A careful examination of the external genitals disclosed the following circumstances: There was neither a penis nor a vagina; but, instead of the former, there was a small clitoris, and, instead of the latter, a superficial depression, or *cul-de-sac*, covered with mucous membrane, and devoid of everything like an aperture, or inlet. The urethra occupied the usual situation, and appeared to be entirely natural; the nymphæ were remarkably diminutive; but the labia were well developed, and contained each a well-formed testis, quite as large and consistent as this organ generally is at the same age in boys. Her hips and chest, thighs and superior extremities, were perfect.

It being apparent, from the facts of the case, that it was one of malformation of the genital organs usually denominated hermaphroditism, the question occurred whether anything could or ought to be done to deprive the poor child of that portion of the genital apparatus which, if permitted to remain until the age of puberty, would be sure to be followed by sexual desire, and which might thus conduce to the establishment of a matrimonial connection. Such an alliance, it was evident, could eventuate only in chagrin and disappointment, if not in disgrace, ruin of character, or even loss of life. Certainly, impregnation could never occur, and even copulation could not be performed, except in the most imperfect manner.

I need not say that I gave the subject all the consideration and reflection that I was capable of bestowing upon it. I was deeply sensible of the responsibility of my position. A new question, involving the rights and happiness of my little patient, and the dearest interests of her parents, was presented to me. I examined the case in all its bearings and relations—moral, physiological, and juridical; I appealed to the records of my profession for a precedent, and I sought the counsel of medical friends. The parents were anxious for an operation; they were intelligent, kind, and tender-hearted, and were willing to sacrifice everything for the welfare of their child. Their only object was to save it from future suffering and misfortune. My own mind was made up; but, before I proceeded to take any further steps, I determined to consult my excellent friend and colleague, Professor Miller, in whose judgment and integrity every one who knows him has the utmost confidence. He saw the child and examined her. He viewed the case, as I had previously, in every possible aspect, and his conclusion was, that excision of the testes was not only justifiable but eminently proper under the circumstances; that it would be an act of kindness and of humanity to the poor child, standing as she did towards society in the relation, not of a boy or a girl, but of a neuter, to deprive her of an appendage of so useless a nature; one which might, if

allowed to proceed in its development, ultimately lead to the ruin of her character and peace of mind.

Backed by such authority, I no longer hesitated what course to pursue. I performed the operation of castration on the 20th of July, 1849, aided by my pupils, Dr. D. D. Thomson, of this city, Dr. Greenburg R. Henry, of Burlington, Iowa, and Dr. William H. Cobb, formerly of Louisville, now of Cincinnati. The little patient being put under the influence of chloroform, I made a perpendicular incision, about two inches in length, into each labium down to the testis, which was then carefully separated from the surrounding structures, and detached by dividing the lower part of the spermatic cord. The arteries of the cord being secured with ligatures, the edges of the wound were brought together with twisted sutures, and the child put to bed. Hardly any blood was lost during the operation. About two hours after, the left labium became greatly distended and discolored; and, upon removing the sutures, the source of the mischief was found to be a small artery, which was immediately drawn out and tied. No unpleasant symptoms of any kind ensued after this, and in a week the little patient was able to be up, being quite well and happy.

The testes were carefully examined after removal, and were found to be perfectly formed in every respect. The spermatic cords were natural.

I have seen this child repeatedly since the operation, as her parents live only a few squares from my office, and have carefully watched her mental and physical development. Her disposition and habits have materially changed, and are now those of a girl; she takes great delight in sewing and house-work, and she no longer indulges in riding sticks and other boyish exercises. Her person is well developed, and her mind uncommonly active for a child of her years.

I would fain present this example as a precedent in similar cases. The reasons which induced me to recommend and perform this operation in the instance before me have been already mentioned, and now, after a lapse of three years, I have no cause to regret the undertaking, or to think that I acted harshly and inconsiderately. If the records of surgery and medical jurisprudence are silent upon the subject; if the learned doctors of the Sorbonne, the fathers of the Royal Academy of Paris, and the Fellows of the Royal College of London have left us no precepts; and if the experience of the present day furnishes no examples; all this, and much more, does not prove that the practice here recommended is not perfectly just and proper, and vindicated upon every principle of science and humanity.

A defective organization of the external genitals is one of the most dreadful misfortunes that can possibly befall any human being. There is nothing that exerts so baneful an influence over his moral and social feelings, which carries with it such a sense of self-abasement and mental degradation, or which so thoroughly "maketh the heart sick," as the conviction of such an individual that he is forever debarred from the joys and pleasures of married life, an

outcast from society, hated and despised, and reviled and persecuted by the world. Nothing but the most perfect resignation, and a well-founded confidence in the mercy and justice of the Creator, can render the lot of such a being at all supportable.

The subject of doubtful sex is one which has always, in all ages, and in all civilized countries, excited the warmest attention of the physiologist, the philosopher, and the medical jurist. Under the vague and ill-chosen name of hermaphroditism, invented at an early period of the world, was described every imaginable form of malformation of the genital and urinary organs, most dissimilar in character; and, consequently, were calculated to mystify and mislead the public mind. A class of beings was imagined, combining, it was said, the qualities of the male and female in the same individual, and capable of performing, within itself, the generative functions. The idea that such a union might exist, had its origin, no doubt, in fable. The reader of mythology need not be reminded here of the story of Hermaphroditus and the nymph Salmacis; how the former so ungallantly resisted the charms and entreaties of the latter, and how, finally, through the interposition of the gods, their bodies were united into one. The ignorance of medical men, the conceit and folly of legislators, and the mercenary conduct of many of the subjects of this variety of congenital malformation, served afterwards, in no small degree, to perpetuate the error thus engendered, and to transmit it, in nearly all its ancient force, down to a comparatively recent period. Modern researches had done much to dissipate these absurdities, when the publication, in 1836, of the great work of Mons. Isidore St. Hilaire, entitled *Histoire des Anomalies de l'Organization*, set the long agitated question forever at rest, by demonstrating, in the most undeniable and conclusive manner, that there is no such thing as hermaphroditism, in the vulgar acceptation of the term; or, in other and more philosophical language, that the union of perfect male and female organs in one and the same individual, is an anatomical and physiological impossibility.

Much prejudice, leading often to the most cruel persecution, existed against this class of individuals among some of the nations of antiquity. The Athenians had a law, providing that all hermaphroditic children should be consigned to the flame; while the Romans ordained that they should be boxed up, and thrown into the sea. In more recent times, all individuals of this description were excluded from holy orders, and from the office of judges, "because they were ranked with infamous persons, to whom the gates of dignity should not be opened."* Much of this prejudice has, fortunately, disappeared, under the benign influences of Christianity and civilization; but much still remains, and must continue in operation, as long as the human mind retains its present organization. If hermaphrodites are no longer burnt and drowned, stoned and persecuted, and mocked and reviled, they are uni-

* Beck's Medical Jurisprudence, vol. i. p. 103, fifth ed. 1835.

versally regarded with a degree of prejudice, amounting generally to positive aversion; and as unfit for any offices of dignity, divine, legal, or political. If such be the fact, and no one can doubt it, every suggestion, calculated to ameliorate the condition of this unfortunate class of beings, by depriving them of their only incentives to matrimony, and thereby dooming them to everlasting celibacy, should be hailed as a valuable contribution to the science and humanity of the present age.

[We have willingly given place to the above communication, not only because it is a very interesting and curious one, but also from the respect we entertain for the opinions of its distinguished author; but in doing so we may be allowed to say that we cannot feel satisfied with the soundness of his argument in the present instance, and that while we will leave the discussion of the subject to those more competent to the task, we may add, that it appears to us the administration of prussic acid to terminate the sufferings of those afflicted with malignant disease, or who have received severe and irremediable injuries, might be justified by the same train of reasoning.—EDITOR.]

ART. XV.—*Case of Ischuria Renalis.* By JAS. MCGRATH, M.D.,
of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

IN the autumn of last year the following case occurred in my practice, which I have thought not unworthy of notice:—

ON the evening of Tuesday, September 9, I was requested to visit Mrs. G—th, a married lady, about twenty-three years of age. I found her sitting up in bed, her head supported by a female friend, her face was of a pale livid or sallow colour and seemed oedematous, her eyes were suffused, her lips colourless, her whole countenance was expressive of severe suffering and great anxiety, her pulse so feeble as to be barely perceptible. I was told she had fainted several times and had something like convulsions; that she was unable to lie down from the feeling of weight about her heart, which seemed to suffocate her. I administered some aromatic spirits of ammonia in water to her, as she disliked wine, it causing nausea. Having resumed my inquiries, I ascertained that when growing up she was subject to occasional fits, that her mother suffered from frequent epileptic attacks, that she herself was now in an advanced state of pregnancy (she thought about eight months so), that some three months since she felt ill and had herself bled, which relieved her then. She pressed me to take blood from her now, as she was satisfied it would again relieve her as before; this, however, I was unwilling to do until I had fully satisfied myself of the nature of her illness, and of its propriety. On examining the chest, loud mucous râles only were audible. The heart's action was rapid, with feeble impulse; the sensibility of the skin was so morbidly increased as to render an examination almost impossible, the slightest touch causing severe pain. I was informed that she had several loose discharges from the bowels during the day, but had passed no water from the